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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PINR](#) [PHUM](#) [KDEM](#) [NI](#)
SUBJECT: NIGERIA: KADUNA GOVERNOR DEFENDS ELECTIONS,
DISCUSSES TERM AGENDA

REF: A. ABUJA 969
[1](#)B. ABUJA 746
[1](#)C. ABUJA 731

[1](#)1. (SBU) Kaduna State Governor Muhammad Namadi Sambo (of the People's Democratic Party (PDP)) discussed with PolCouns on September 28 the April polls and provided insight into his agenda for his first term in office. While conceding that some local government areas in Kaduna state experienced electoral irregularities, Governor Sambo claimed that on the whole, and unlike in the South, elections in Kaduna represented the most "transparent, free, and fair" polls in Nigeria. Sambo also contended that there was significant internal democracy within the PDP. He praised former governor of Kaduna, Ahmed Makarfi (PDP) for improving the state's road network and connecting 70 percent of Kaduna residents to the national power grid. While poverty remains rife in Kaduna and across the North, Sambo maintained, democracy is improving governance and citizens' access to healthcare and education.

[1](#)2. (U) Sambo pledged to improve security in Kaduna, recognizing it as a prerequisite for socioeconomic development in the state. Sambo lamented that only 200,000 children attend primary school in Kaduna. Since lack of teachers is connected to the low attendance of children in schools, Sambo remarked, he said he has increased teachers' salaries by 5 percent, proposed legislation making primary school mandatory in the state, provided free books and school uniforms for students, and built housing for teachers. Sambo also claimed that he has increased the share of state budget for education to 27 percent (330 million naira per annum). Characterizing Quranic schools as a "nuisance," Sambo declared that he has made Islamic education part of the curriculum of secular primary schools in Kaduna to encourage attendance by Muslims. In addition, Sambo criticized Muslims in the North for "not caring about education" unlike their Christian counterparts in the South.

[1](#)3. (U) With respect to Kaduna's limited electrical power supply, which has forced many businesses (including, a large textile mill recently) to shut down, Sambo announced plans to increase the state's supply from 50 to 250 megawatts over the next four years, through private sector investment and development. He argued that investment in hydroelectric power rather than gas pipelines was a more appropriate choice for generating electricity given the vandalism of oil

pipelines in Nigeria. He claimed to have identified several locations for the construction of hydroelectric dams, which will be linked to irrigation schemes so as also to restore agricultural production in Kaduna state. Increasing access to health care is also a priority for Sambo, who plans to construct 110 primary health care centers and provide free medical care for pregnant women. In addition, Sambo promised to provide housing and car loans to doctors to enable them to serve in rural areas, where healthcare is limited.

¶4. (SBU) COMMENT: While Kaduna, an historic center of northern politics, where many prominent businessman, politicians, and military personnel reside, once boasted a strong All Nigeria People's Party (ANPP) presence, eight years of PDP rule under former governor Ahmed Makarfi (one of the few northern governors to support Obasanjo's third term bid), helped transform Kaduna into a PDP stronghold. At the same time, the inability of the ANPP to designate a consensus candidate in the lead-up to April worked against them. While Post's election observers in Kaduna witnessed polls open on April 14, and the turnout was reportedly better than in most states in southern Nigeria, the claim that elections were "transparent, free, and fair" in Kaduna is contrary to our observation (see refs B and C). END COMMENT.
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